LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1. (currently amended) A method for presenting target ~~targeting~~ content to users in a communications network[[;]], the method comprising the steps of:

determining ~~targeted~~ user characteristics of a viewer;

receiving the user characteristics and schedule information on a viewer's receiver device;

selecting the target content according to features available on the receiver device; and

presenting the target content in accordance with said user characteristics and said schedule information.

Claim 2. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~for targeted content presentation in a communications network for regularly scheduled content opportunities, the method~~ further comprising the steps of:

monitoring ~~the~~ a programming stream for ~~opportunities~~ opportunity descriptors and content descriptors;

determining ~~the~~ a source for alternate target content; and

matching the opportunity descriptors to the target ~~available~~ content and the ~~viewer~~ user characteristics[[;]]

~~presenting content to the viewer; and~~

~~updating the secure audit log with the viewing result~~.

Claim 3. (currently amended) The method according to claim 2, further including the step of updating ~~the~~ a secure audit log with ~~the~~ a viewing result.

Claim 4. (currently amended) The method according to claim 1, ~~for targeted content presentation in a communications network for functional/user interaction content opportunities, the method~~ further comprising the steps of:

monitoring ~~the~~ programming and content streams for ~~opportunities~~ opportunity

descriptors and content descriptors;

pre-matching the ~~opportunities~~ opportunity descriptors to the ~~available~~ target content and the user ~~viewer~~ characteristics;

determining ~~the~~ a source for alternate target content ~~as described previously~~;

checking security rights at a function invocation on the receiver device to determine appropriateness of the target content ~~insertion~~;

~~presenting~~ if the target content ~~to the viewer if~~ is not appropriate, skipping the presenting step; and

updating pre-matched ~~opportunities~~ opportunity descriptors for a next function invocation of the receiver function.

Claim 5. (currently amended) The method according to claim 4, further including the step of updating ~~the~~ a secure audit log with ~~the~~ a viewing result.

Claim 6. (currently amended) A method according to claim 2, further including the steps of:

monitoring ~~the~~ a content descriptor transmission stream for opportunity descriptors and content descriptors;

matching the opportunity ~~map~~ descriptors with the receiver device's capabilities;

verifying that permission is available to access the received target content;

matching ~~of~~ the content descriptors to the user characteristics ~~viewer profile information~~;

selecting the content descriptors with the strongest ~~content~~ match to the user characteristics ~~if local persistent storage is available to the MDE~~;

~~determining~~ if the received target content is not already in storage[[;]],

determining if the received target content can be acquired in a timely manner;

~~verifying access rights to storage if access rights are verified, verifying availability of storage;~~

~~determining if content can be deleted to make storage available by~~ comparing the content descriptor matches of the ~~new~~ received target content with the content descriptor matches of existing target content in the receiver's storage[[,]] ~~and replacing~~ to determine if the existing

target content ~~with~~ has weaker matches ~~to make storage available~~ than the received target content;

acquiring the target content from the ~~designated~~ determined alternate source; and

placing the acquired target content in storage.

Claim 7. (currently amended) The method according to claim 2, ~~whereby the ME/DE also forwards~~ wherein a configuration of a micro decision engine (MDE) includes triggers that indicate to the MDE if certain components need to be replaced to enable dynamic adaptation ~~of the system~~ to new feedback algorithms, ~~better~~ improved functional capability, and/or component code fixes.

Claim 8. (currently amended) The method according to claim [[2]]7, ~~whereby~~ wherein the MDE ~~also~~ receives ~~profile characteristic information on the viewers~~ the user characteristics from ~~the~~ an operator.

Claim 9. (currently amended) The method according to claim 2, wherein the ~~viewers profile data is~~ user characteristics are encrypted to prevent unauthorized access.

Claim 10. (currently amended) The method according to claim 2, wherein the ~~data is~~ user characteristics are kept in encrypted format within the facilities of a content acquisition[[CA]] system.

Claim 11. (currently amended) The method according to claim [[2]]8, wherein a plurality of instances of the MDE can be generated to match one or more of ~~the~~ capabilities and requirements of the ~~system~~ receiver device and the capabilities of ~~the various~~ a plurality of receiver device models on the network

Claim 12. (currently amended) A system for presenting target ~~targeting~~ content to users in a communications network, the system comprising:

means for determining ~~targeted~~ user characteristics of a viewer;

means for receiving the user characteristics and schedule information on a viewer's receiver device;

means for selecting target content according to features available on the receiver device; and

means for presenting the target content in accordance with said user characteristics and said schedule information.

Claim 13. (currently amended) The system according to claim 12, ~~for targeted content presentation in a communications network, the system~~ further comprising:

a head end component ~~having:~~ including

a content schedule component having[[:]] a content schedule database[[;]], and a content scheduler for accessing the content schedule database to provide schedule triggers[[;]]

a profile component having[[:]] a profile database[[;]], and a profile scheduler for accessing the profile database to provide profile triggers[[;]],

a matching engine for accessing the content schedule and profile components to match content to end-users[[;]],

a delivery engine for delivering the matched content[[;]], and

a combiner that receives the delivered matched content and combines it with available content streams;

a receiver component ~~having:~~ including a data filter for filtering data[[;]] and a microdecision engine for providing the guidance and commands to present content to the end-user from the data filter; and

a data network between the head end and the end-user components for transmitting data.

Claim 14. (original) The system according to claim 13, wherein the delivery engine is provided in a plurality of instances to provide for load balancing and capacity requirements.

Claim 15. (currently amended) A storage medium readable by a computer, the medium

encoding a computer process to provide a method for ~~targeted~~ target content presentation in a communications network, the computer process comprising the steps of:

~~a processing portion for~~ determining ~~targeted~~ user characteristics of a viewer;

receiving the user characteristics and schedule information on a viewer's receiver device;

selecting target content according to features available on the receiver device; and

~~a processing portion for~~ presenting the target content in accordance with said user characteristics and said schedule information.